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Organization Man: Rational *and* Self-Actualizing

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Professor Simon continues, as his title states, to make rationality and self-actualization mutually exclusive. Although more research is needed to explore each view, my position is that we need much more research that seeks to integrate the two views.

I

I believe that my descriptions of Professor Simon's positions are accurate and that he misunderstands the thrust of the argument. For example, I was not confused between the influence of the internal organizational environment and the influence of the manager upon the individual. The point being made was that the manager is the agent of the organization and has much to say about creating its internal environment. Given the rational-man theory of administration, one can travel from the internal organizational environment to the manager to the people in power to managerial control, etc., and still find that all these factors usually have, from the subordinate's viewpoint, a similar psychological impact upon him or her.

Nor do I confuse an "is" with an "ought." If a manager reads Simon's book, and if it tells him (descriptively) that "organizations train and indoctrinate" their members and that they manage the "internalization of influence because it injects into the very nervous systems of the organization members the criteria of decision that the organization wishes to employ," and if he makes this descriptive statement a part of his theory of management, then "indoctrination," etc., become his

responsibility. I realize that Simon does not view himself responsible for the translation by the manager of Simon's "is" statement to an "ought" activity. I suggest that we have a responsibility in this translation process because we provide the models of organization from which practitioners may choose courses of action.

Similarly, I agree with Simon about the bankruptcy of most of the youth rebellion. However, I maintain that we are partially responsible for the rebellion because we provided no model of organization that went much beyond the traditional ones (in terms of the usage of power, specialization of work, and the creation of conformity, closedness, and mistrust, etc.).

I am aware of the requirements of scientific empirical evidence, but surely there is room for more than one kind of article. Simon's brilliant *Administrative Behavior* would have never become a classic if people judged its contribution on the basis of empirical scientific evidence. The Levin work was presented only as anecdotal evidence because that was the only evidence available. Moreover, Professor Simon's rebuttal contains several undocumented generalizations. For example, he asserts, with no evidence (and I believe it is appropriate to do so in this context), that the following statement is "accepted by most observers":

"Most of the (information) systems devised so far (are resisted because they) simply did not provide the information managers perceive as most relevant to their decisions."

In the study cited, of management information systems, I found that another scenario was more plausible. Managers rarely resisted or feared primi-

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tive and incomplete information systems. Indeed, they enjoyed maintaining them and knocking them down because the systems were so weak. However, when asked to imagine that information systems could provide the data they needed, their playful resistance turned to deep fear because they inferred (I believe incorrectly) that they would lose much of their space of free movement and experience psychological failure.

As a member of the Hitch Committee to introduce management information systems to the State Department (to mention one of many examples available), the senior State Department officials' great fears evolved around the day that the systems might indeed become more sophisticated and complete. Two of the leaders of the field of operations research have agreed with the plausibility of my argument (Hertz 1971, Wagner 1971).

II

There are three assertions that Professor Simon makes about my position that require comment in the name of integrating rational and self-actualizing man.

I am not against structure. As Professor Simon knows, I have suggested the design of four different organizational structures, each with its own decision rules (Argyris 1964). It is one thing to maintain that formal structure inhibits people's energy for commitment and initiative; it is another to say that structure is a devil and individuals are angels (a position which even Simon knows is ludicrous).

I have focused less on what organizations have accomplished (in terms of achieving their everyday goals) not because this is unimportant; just the opposite. I focus on the inner workings and processes of organizations because I believe that if organizational designs and management theories are not enlarged to include my view of man, the organizations will not be able to continue their remarkable accomplishments. True, organizations have produced high economic standards, but they have also (unintentionally) produced, for many of their participants, a low quality of life, and this has effects upon the outputs (*Work in America*, 1973). Professor Simon points to the output of organizations but does not point to the increasing nationwide distrust of public and private organizations documented by several polls recently (Argyris 1973).

Yes, I am concerned with the differential power of subordinates *vis à vis* superiors. At the lower level, power is critical because organizations have been so designed and managed that obtaining power is one of the few successful ways employees have to bring about change. That is why unions have developed in the past and why a quasi-union has recently developed in the State Department.

At the upper level, power is also important. However, I agree with Professor Simon that affiliation and achievement needs are equally critical. Goal achievement is part of the central governing variables and affiliation is part of the through-puts in a model first published a decade ago where interpersonal affiliation issues and their relationships to power and achievement are explored (Argyris 1962, 1965, and 1971).

The caricature of self-actualization is particularly unfortunate if we are to generate interest in bridging rational and actualizing man. I tried to differentiate between Maslow's global view of self-actualization and a more restricted view that I have suggested. Nearly 15 years ago I published a book attempting to provide a quantitative measure of my meaning of self-actualization (Argyris 1960), and nearly 10 years ago I began a series of studies to develop quantitative indices for the same phenomenon at the upper levels (Argyris 1962, 1965, and 1971).

Concerning emotions, a primary purpose of the research (Likert, McGregor, and myself) has always been to enhance the effectiveness of rational activity in organizations. The point made was not that Simon is unaware of emotions; the point was how he deals with them. Take four examples:

1. Perceived personal conflict is defined as a function of the subjective uncertainty of alternatives, the subjective incomparability of alternatives, and the subjective unacceptability of alternatives (March and Simon 1958, p. 115). This conceptualization views the phenomenon primarily in cognitive information processing terms, a valid view but one that I suggest has the limitations noted in my paper.

2. Simon places his work on one end of a continuum and at the other end—labeled affective or emotion—he places the work of Bruner, Postman, Asch, and Bales (Simon 1957, p. xxiii). The first two are contributors to cognitive psychology and learning. Asch and Bales are experimental social psychologists. Robert Dahl placed Simon's view of man somewhere between economic theorists and the social psychologists just mentioned (1957, p.

247). Yet none of these men's work deals with the model of man that I am asking to be considered.

3. "Personality! Truly a magical slogan to charm away the problems that our intellectual tools don't handle" (Simon 1957, p. xv).

4. About identification mechanisms which have strong emotional as well as cognitive components, Simon states:

My present inclination would be to stress the cognitive factors even more strongly than is done in the chapter as it stands. This was, indeed, my original inclination, but I was swayed by the current fashion in social psychology of always preferring affective to cognitive explanatory mechanisms (Simon 1957, p. xxxvi).

Reason, for me, is not, and has never been, a shackle of freedom. Reason is a foundation for my view of interpersonal competence acquisition (Argyris 1968) and the basis of a recent attack on the anti-intellectualism of T-group practitioners (Argyris 1968). It is the design and administration of organizations that do not encourage the discussion of emotions and emotionally loaded substantive issues (when they are relevant) that is the shackle. I maintain there is precious little in the work of rational-man theorists to overcome the problem. They need *not* have much to say on the subject *if* they would integrate their work with ours.

Finally, the point on descriptive versus normative activities. The point being made was *not* that description is unnecessary or unimportant, but that:

(a) Not enough emphasis was placed by rational-man theorists on new models of organizations that were based on an enlarged and more complex model of man.

(b) A more profound point was that all descriptive social science research is probably normative. If the social science universe is basically a convention, then all we are describing are normative positions.

It is not an accident that in making his point of the importance of descriptive research in bringing about change, Simon's examples are of "evils" (slavery, urban slums, war, etc.). The reason descriptive work may help to bring about change in those conditions is that it portrays a reality that is not congruent to our espoused theories and aspirations. (That is why Simon is able to call them "evils.") Descriptive research of organizations would not have the same impact if all that was available were the rational-man theories. Change might occur in the direction of making rational-

man theories more effective. But what would make people dissatisfied with the incompleteness of the rational-man view if there were no competing theories?

III

I should like to offer two invitations. The first is for a joint study by the two of us of the "same" phenomena so that we can begin to make constructive and additive propositions about similarities and differences. The second is to encourage a study of this debate by a third scholar. I believe that Professor Simon and myself have made some useful contributions in our papers. I also believe that we have, at times, unintentionally polarized and misunderstood each other's positions. The win-lose dynamics may make it more likely that each one presents his thrust, but they discourage the bridging that must occur. Recently, Professor Dunnette and I participated in a study of our debate (Dunnette and Campbell, Argyris 1968) by Alderfer (1972). Both of us found it a very useful learning experience. More importantly, if the emotional dynamics of these debates can be better understood, perhaps their unintended dysfunctional consequences on the development of knowledge will be minimized and the cause of integrating emotions and rationality furthered!

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